

A MINISTERING ANGEL.

A STORY OF A FAMOUS SINGER.

Continued from last issue.

"How everybody stared at you when you joined in and sung," I said.

The snow had turned into sleet; a great chill fell over the whole city. We looked out of our windows, peeping through the shutters, and pitying the people as they rushed past.

A sharp rap at the door. John thrust in a note.

"My dear friend: Can you come? Annie has gone. She said you would be sure to come to her funeral. She spoke of you to the last. She will be buried at four."

I laid the poor little blotted note into Parepa's hand. How it stormed! We looked into each other's faces helplessly. I said: "Dear, I must go, but you sit by the fire and rest. I'll be at home in two hours; and poor Annie has gone!"

"Tell me about it, Mary, I am going with you," she answered.

She threw on her heavy cloak, wound her long white woollen scarf closely about her throat, drew on her woollen gloves, and we set out together in the storm.

Annie's mother was a dressmaker, who sewed for me and my friends. She was left a widow when her one little girl was five years old. Her husband was drowned off the coast, and out of the blinding pain and loss and anguish had grown a sort of idolatry for the delicate, beautiful child, whose brown eyes looked like the young husband's.

For fifteen years this mother had loved and worked for Annie, her whole being going out to bless her one child. I had grown fond of them; and in small ways, with books and flowers, outings and simple pleasures, I had made myself dear to them. The end of the delicate girl's life had not seemed so near, though her doom had been hovering about her for years. I had thought it all over as I took the

Easter lilies from my window-shelf and wrapped them in thick papers and hid them out of the storm under my cloak. I knew there would be no other flowers in their wretched room. How endless was the way to that East End house! At last we reached the place. In the street stood the hearse, known only to the poor.

We climbed flight after flight of narrow dark stairs of the small upper rooms. In the middle of the floor stood a stained coffin, lined with stiff, rattling and cheap gauze, resting on uncovered trestles of wood.

We each took the mother's hand and stood a moment with her, silent. All hope had gone out of her face. She shed no tears, but as I held her cold hand I felt a shudder go over her, but she neither spoke nor sobbed.

The driving storm had made us late, and the plain, hard-working people sat stiffly against the walls. Some one gave us chairs and we sat close to the mother.

A dreadful hush fell over the small room. I whispered to the mother and asked:—

"Why did you wait so long to send for me? All this would have been so different."

With a kind of a stare she looked at me.

"I can't remember why I didn't send," she said, her hand to her head, and added, "I seemed to die, too, and forgot till they brought the coffin. Then I knew it all."

The undertaker came and bustled about. He looked at myself and Parepa, as if to say, "It's time to go." The wretched funeral service was over.

Without a word Parepa rose and walked to the head of the coffin. She laid her white scarf on an empty chair, threw her cloak back from her shoulders, where it fell in long, soft black lines from her noble figure like the drapery of mourning. She laid her soft, fair hand on the cold forehead, passed it tenderly over the wasted, delicate face, looked down at